

Isaac Lewis Baker to Andrew Jackson, February 18, 1821, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

ISAAC L. BAKER¹ TO JACKSON.

¹ A Kentuckian, captain U. S. A. till 1817, now a Louisiana planter.

Natchez, February 18, 1821.

. . . . I was gratified on reaching this place yesterday to find Mr Earle in this country.² He has done well in exhibiting his full length likeness

² See vol. II., p. 402. Ralph E. W. Earl, son of Ralph Earl, a wandering Connecticut painter, studied art in London in 1809 and 1810. Returning to the United States he adopted the life of a travelling portrait painter and visited Mississippi. At Natchez he married a daughter of Mrs. Jackson's sister Mrs. Jane Caffery (see vol. I., p. 214). Soon afterwards Earl became a widower and went to the Hermitage to live. He was a loyal and amiable friend and never outlived his welcome in Jackson's household. He died at the Hermitage in 1837. He painted many portraits of Jackson and some portraits of Jackson's political friends. They do not rank high in art, but they compare favorably with the work of the wandering portrait painters of the day. Jackson had a high opinion of "my friend Earl" (see Pliny Earle, *The Earle Family*, p. 89 n.).

Referring to Earl's portrait of Jackson exhibited in Natchez, Andrew J. Donelson wrote Jackson from New Orleans, Mar. 3, 1821, as follows: "Mr Duncan has favoured Mr Earl with a room in his private house, in which hangs the portrait of Genl J. It is pronounced by all who have seen it, the best likeness ever exhibited in the city. There is no doubt of the Corporation's taking a copy. The city council of Natchez have agreed to compensate

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Mr Earl with \$1000, if he furnishes them with a copy in four months from the time of their meeting, last month, Mr Earl is well and sends his best wishes to yourself and Aunt.”

here as it has gratified the citizens and not been unprofitable to himself. An effort (which will succeed) is making here to raise a thousand Dollars to buy one for this city. When this arrangement is complete which is expected to morrow Mr Earle will go on to New Orleans where I have no doubt he will meet all the patronage he is entitled to receive. I will return as far as Plaquemine on my way home with him and will give him such letters to my friends in the city as may be of service to him.

I send you with this a pamphlet lately much read and sought after in our state against the Robertson Dynasty,³ which has declared open war against all your friends and adherents who dared to oppose their coming into power. They have quarrelled with the French and cannot get on well with only a moiety of the americans to aid them in the extraordinary game they are playing.

3 Thomas B. Robertson, governor of Louisiana 1820–1824.